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~~BIOGRAPHY~~

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF THE LATE

DR THOMAS TROTTER,

PHYSICIAN TO THE BRITISH FLEET.

(Read to the Harveian Society, on the 12th April 1845.)

By ALEXANDER COCKBURN, Surgeon R. N.

AS PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY.



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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

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GENTLEMEN,—Upon the present occasion I am anxious to lay before you the memoir of some one belonging to the medical department of the navy, and I know none whose name is more deserving of being recorded in the annals of the Harveian Society than my much respected friend, the late Dr Trotter, Physician to the Fleet, under the command of Admiral Earl Howe, Lord Bridport, Admiral Earl St Vincent, and the Honourable Admiral Cornwallis.

Dr Trotter was the eldest son of John Trotter, Esq. of Melrose, in Roxburghshire, where he was born in the year 1761. At a very early age he was sent to a school at Kelso, then kept by Mr Perry, afterwards editor of the Morning Chronicle. Having finished his education at school, he repaired to the University of Edinburgh to study medicine, where he remained till 1778, when he entered the navy at the age of eighteen. Shortly after the battle between Admiral Keppel and the French fleet, his first appointment was surgeon's mate of the Berwick 74, then under the command of the Honourable Captain Keith Stewart.

The first year the Berwick was employed in the Channel fleet, it was then common in every cruise even for a few weeks for seamen to be affected with scurvy; and Dr Trotter seems to have early directed his attention and inquiries to the causes of this disease and the means of preventing and curing it. The carpenter's mate was attacked with scurvy, but not thought to be in a dangerous state. Yet so rapid was the progress of the symptoms, that he expired while the Doctor was conversing with him, by a seaman imprudently opening a port opposite his hammock, from a current of fresh air overpowering him. Scorbutic seamen often expire when suddenly raised to the erect posture, or exposed in boats when being conveyed from their ships to the hospital. This circumstance made a strong impression on the physician's mind, and led to many valuable precepts in his future practice.

The Berwick sailed in the spring of 1780, for the West Indies in the squadron under the command of Commodore Walsingham. Soon after their arrival at Jamaica, this squadron sailed to see the homeward bound fleet through the Gulph of Florida, and in their passage back, on the 5th of October, when off Bermuda, fell in with the dreadful hurricane that caused so much distress to the islands. In this gale the whole of the ships were dismasted, some of them were obliged to throw their guns overboard. The Thunderer, Commodore Walsingham, went down in the night, and the Stirling Castle was lost on her way back to Jamaica. The Berwick Captain Stewart, being now the senior officer, ordered the disabled ships to make the best of their way to Jamaica; while in his own ship, rigged with jury-

masts, he shaped his course for England. On their passage home the crew suffered dreadfully from dysentery and scurvy. Forty died before she reached the channel, and upwards of two hundred were landed at the hospitals in great distress. The sufferings of the crew were great indeed, as the medicine chest was stove to pieces in the gale, and all the delicacies of diet destroyed by the salt water; added to which they were upon a short allowance of bad water. A king's ship under such accumulated distress had seldom or never come into port. The Doctor himself was a great sufferer on this occasion.

After the *Berwick* had refitted, she sailed again under the command of Commodore Stewart to join the North Sea fleet, under the command of Sir Hyde Parker, and was greatly distinguished in the action with the Dutch fleet, on the 5th August on the Doggar Bank, when a Dutch 64 was sunk in the action. On this occasion Dr Trotter received the public thanks of the commodore for his services to the wounded after the battle.

In April 1782, Dr Trotter was promoted to the rank of surgeon, and appointed to the *Bustlesloop* of war, which remained only a few months in commission, when he was appointed to the *William* armed ship on the Liverpool station. This ship in the succeeding February got aground at the mouth of the river Mersey, and in consequence of the damage she received was paid off. At this time out of 750 surgeons on the navy list, only 120 were allowed a small half-pay, and Dr Trotter, not being one of those entitled to it, he, along with many others, was compelled to seek employment in the African slave trade.

The *Brooks*, a Liverpool Guineaman, to which he was appointed surgeon, sailed about the beginning of June. After a favourable passage of a little more than a month, they came to anchor at Cape Lee Haw, on the Gold Coast, having buried, on their passage, a seaman who died of small pox. But by taking proper precautions, the disease only extended to another of the crew, who recovered. They were detained nearly eleven months on the coast, collecting their cargo of slaves. Towards the conclusion, symptoms of scurvy, such as spongy gums, stiff joints, and rigid muscles, began to appear among them. Their diet had hitherto been boiled rice or beans, with a little palm oil, salt, and pepper, without any animal food whatever. The most corpulent, and those who seemed to fare the best, were the first and greatest sufferers. Dr Trotter urged the captain to procure vegetables and fruit for them, as several had died; but the captain of the vessel, whose disposition and character was congenial to the trade, paid little attention to the request, and left the coast with a few gallons of lime juice, ten or twelve dozen of oranges, and some small baskets of guavas. This was owing to his doubting that the disease was scurvy, which Dr Trotter had so confidently asserted it to be. This small stock was soon consumed, and the consequence was dreadful;—the decks in every corner were crowded with objects of distress, exhibiting scenes of affliction, equal to any ever recorded of this loathsome disease. After a few weeks' passage, however,

to the relief of these unfortunate persons, they arrived at Antigua; having buried forty on the passage. There they obtained an abundant supply of fruit, which was served to them three or four times a-day, and soon checked the disease, as by the time they arrived at Jamaica, about a fortnight afterwards, it was entirely extirpated. Here their cargo was exposed to sale, and brought high prices.

While the ship lay in Kingston harbour, the doctor was attacked with fever, was dangerously ill, and was scarcely recovered when he arrived in England, about the end of September. He was so disgusted with the horrors of the slave trade, and the depressed state of health which he had undergone, that nothing could have induced him to take another voyage to the coast of Africa in this inhuman traffic. He therefore set out for Edinburgh with the view of resuming his medical studies at the University of that place. On his arrival he found the Brunonian doctrine in full activity, and supported by some of the most able young physicians then at the university. This doctrine, the rival to that of Dr Cullen, was more suited to captivate the imagination than to inform the judgment; also better adapted to dazzle the fancy of a speculative mind than to clear the doubts of the practical physician. It sounded strange in the ears of a navy surgeon, to hear that the scurvy could be best cured by a diet of animal food, brandy, and opium, the disease being owing to deficient nourishment and weakness of the moving fibre. Dr Milman's book on scurvy had been lately published, and gave great weight to this view of the disease. When, therefore, Dr Cullen came to treat on scurvy in the course of his lectures, an account of the scurvy among the negroes in the African ship was sent him; and Dr Cullen was so staggered with the new facts detailed, in a letter from a gentleman then present, that he said he never came to that desk so badly prepared. He, however, resumed his lecture, and said nothing more on the gentleman's letter. Dr Trotter now turned his attention more to the subject, and in the succeeding year, published his *Observations on Scurvy*, and combated from practice all the erroneous portion of Milman's theory, as being dangerous in the treatment of the disease.

Dr Trotter for some time after this practised as a surgeon at Wooler in Northumberland, at the same time applying to his studies preparatory to taking his degree at the university, and which he did in 1788. The subject of his thesis was *de Ebrietate*, which he fixed upon as never having been treated of before. It fell to the lot of Dr Gregory to peruse it for the press, who was highly pleased with it, and said it would be highly acceptable to Dr Cullen, and a fine subject to comment upon afterwards. On the public day of graduation Dr Cullen introduced the thesis with many compliments, and concluded with saying of the author, "*Certe non Ebrius erat, qui hanc dissertationem scribebat,*" which convulsed the whole assembly with laughter.

He was shortly after this honoured with the thanks of the Royal Humane Society, transmitted to him by Dr Hawes, the illustrious founder of that institution. Dr Hawes observed, that the investi-

gation of so important an inquiry in a regular scientific manner was never before thought of. It was a subject happily left to be ingeniously executed and amplified by Dr Trotter.

The next subject of the Doctor's inquiry was a review of the medical department of the navy, which was published at Portsmouth in 1789, in which he animadverts with a degree of energy and spirit upon the mode of payment of the medical officers,—the supplying of medicines and necessaries for the sick,—that showed how much he had studied the subject, and how anxious he was to bring about a change so much wanted in this department.

It is now upwards of fifty years since those animadversions were made, the improvements then suggested having been introduced by piecemeal. One of them was the gold medal to the best writer of an official medical journal, which was generously bestowed by the late Sir Gilbert Blane; and his last suggestion and improvement was the appointment of a physician general, which upon the breaking up of the public board was carried into effect, and given to our zealous and distinguished friend Sir William Burnett. Dr Trotter being again called into service in October 1789, he was appointed to the *Barfleur*, the flag-ship of Admiral Roddam at Portsmouth. While there he devoted much of his time to professional inquiries. Amongst these the best mode of preserving water at sea attracted his attention; and he advocated in the strongest manner the charring of the inside of the casks; and submitted the result of his experiments to the victualling board; the practical inference to be drawn from which was, that all casks to hold water at sea ought to be slightly charred in putting them together, not only the staves but also the heads.

He now began his second improved edition of *Observations on Scurvy*, with a new theory on that disease, and was the first physician that employed pneumatic chemistry to account for the proximate cause; but he did not, as has been usually done by theorists, build his practice upon his theory, but explained the theory by his successful practice. It had been proved by chemical philosophy that oxygen imparted floridity to the blood, and those causes which produced scurvy abstracted the oxygen from the vital fluid. The conclusion was therefore obvious, that the vegetable acids, so powerful in the cure, imparted oxygen to the blood. Whatever confidence might be attached to this doctrine, it is plain it could not weaken the best mode of cure in this dreadful sea disease. He considered the concentrated form of the citric acid equally efficacious as the fresh lemon juice, having tried it in a great many bad cases.

From this time till about Christmas 1793, he served as surgeon of the *Edgar*, *Royal William*, *Duke*, and *Centurion*, when he was appointed second physician to the royal hospital at Haslar.

In the east wing, which became subject to his attendance, he commenced a reform in every department; he issued a code of rules for the attending dispensers, nurses, &c.; he instituted a clinical ward, where he had particular cases selected, and there met his visiting dispensers every day. Many alterations and improvements were introduced by him, in regard to diet for the sick, and other comforts

before unknown in the hospital; and he was ever most anxious that the sick-bed of the sailor should want for nothing that lay in the power of the physician to bestow.

On the 9th April 1794, he received his appointment from the Admiralty as physician to the fleet, under the command of Richard Earl Howe, which at this time consisted of 32 sail of the line, 8 frigates, a sloop of war, a fire ship, one cutter, 2 luggers, with the Charon hospital ship, on board of which he was ordered to embark. On the 16th he had visited the different ships, and reported their state to the commander in chief; 725 on the sick list, 53 confined to bed, 21 objects for the hospital. The medical duty and discipline in the fleet quickly partook of the utmost decision and activity. All forms of mistaken medical philosophy quickly sunk under the open and candid explanations that brought every thing new into practice. The surgeons of their respective ships were called upon for regular returns of the sick, with remarks. I beg to quote the following as a specimen from my friend Mr M'Callum, who was then surgeon of the Valiant 74.

He remarks, after giving a statement of his sick list, "the fever that has for some time past prevailed among our people has of late been diminished, and now seems nearly worn out. Those cases which have occurred latterly have been slight, with a very general intermittent tendency. Ever since its first appearance, few other complaints comparatively have occurred, and these have been of the catarrhal kind, in some degree combined with the fever; in general, however, easily cured, but equally infectious with the fever in its most distinct form."

"We have had no appearance of scurvy, although some of our men had lately before we sailed come off a long cruise, during which they had been afflicted with it. This, I hope, is owing to the very judicious supply of lemon juice and sugar."

On the 2d May, Lord Howe sailed with the fleet, and about 400 sail of convoy for different parts of the world. The French fleet of 27 ships of the line sailed from Brest nearly at the same time, under the command of Admiral Villaret, an officer of great merit. He had been selected by Robespierre, and was, under pain of the guillotine, required to take the command and put to sea at all hazards. Most of the ships of the French fleet were of their finest classes.

The ships of the British fleet were all smaller than those of the corresponding class in the French service. The hostile fleets had been at sea about three weeks, and England awaited the account of a naval action, as of an event that was to decide her future destiny. Lord Howe, after seeing the convoys to the southward of Cape Finisterre, detached Rear Admiral Montague with six ships of the line to protect the trade still farther; while his Lordship returned and cruised 100 leagues to the westward of Ushant.

On the 28th May the enemy's fleet was discovered. It was blowing extremely hard, with a heavy sea; the chace was therefore arduous and difficult. The fleets were partially engaged from this time; but a general action was prevented by the boisterous and thick

state of the weather, until the glorious 1st of June, when the sun rose clear and bright, with moderate weather. It was Sunday. The enemy's fleet consisted of 26 sail of the line, the British of 25. At half-past 7, Lord Howe by a general signal directed the people to have breakfast. At half-past 8 A. M. the fleet formed in excellent and compact order, bore up on the French fleet about two miles to leeward of ours, and the Queen Charlotte, Lord Howe's ship, with the Union Jack flying at the main, about 50 minutes past 9, poured her broadside into the starboard quarter of the *Montagne*, the largest, perhaps the finest, ship at that time in the world, bearing the flag of Admiral Villaret. I should be happy to follow out the narrative of this great action, were it consistent with the spirit of a medical essay. It must suffice, however, to state, that the action became general, and continued till 4 P. M. Seven of the enemy's ships remained in our possession; one sunk, *Le Vengeur*, and about 320 of her crew perished. In the ships taken 690 were killed, 580 wounded. In the British fleet 277 were killed, and 780 wounded.

After this splendid victory the physician took care to remind the commander in chief of the professional abilities of the surgeons and assistants of the fleet; and the first mate of every ship that had passed his examination for surgeon was promoted to that rank, and a considerable increase was made to the monthly pay of every surgeon's mate in the service.

When the fleet arrived at Spithead on the 13th, Dr Trotter got the surgeons to call a meeting of their corps to address the commander in chief on the numerous defects and deficient pay of the medical department. This memorial he presented to the commander in chief, and his Lordship, when he went to London, was pleased to lay it before the Board of Admiralty, and insisted on more encouragement being given to the medical officers. In consequence of this remonstrance 200 surgeons were added to the half-pay list, which was the first step that was taken to improve the situation of the medical officers, and paved the way for all future improvements. It happened that a contagious fever prevailed in many ships of the line in the French fleet, and in the captured ships some of them were dreadfully infected with it. The consequence was that it spread very generally throughout the British fleet. Some of the captains were so alarmed at this occurrence, that they urged the physician to recommend to the commander in chief to sink the French prizes by way of safety to the British ships. After, however, visiting these ships, he reported to Earl Howe, and stated that he had no fear that the infection would be soon subdued, and that the summer season was highly favourable to the extinction of the contagion. The fleet arrived in port in twelve days. The officers were all strictly admonished in the duty they had to perform, in clearing their ships, by sending the worst cases on shore to the hospital, and cleaning and ventilating the decks, white washing, &c. The confidence which the physician's opinion gave to the officers was highly encouraging to them in their duty, and the fleet, in the space of ten days after its arrival, was con-



sidered safe from contagion. The mortality amongst the French prisoners was very great, and some of the British ships suffered severely. Upon the fleet being reported by the physician free from infection, the King, Queen, and Princesses visited the Queen Charlotte, the flag ship of Earl Howe, who was received with all that enthusiasm and joy which his victory deserved, and was presented by his Majesty on the quarter deck, with a diamond hilted sword, valued at three thousand guineas.

In the following spring after the winter cruise, a scorbutic taint became very general in the fleet. The winter had been extremely severe, and the contractors could not supply a sufficiency of fresh meat, from its being so dear and scarce. The first traces and subsequent progress of the disease were duly watched by the physician, who addressed the Admiralty on the subject, and represented the urgent necessity of a large supply of fruit and vegetables to arrest its progress. This was immediately ordered. The disease was checked and not a ship remained inactive. Soon after this the aged and gallant admiral, incapable of sustaining the anxiety of his charge, resigned his command, and was succeeded by Lord Bridport, who on the 12th of June sailed from Spithead with fourteen sail of the line, five frigates, two fire-ships, and the Charon hospital ship with the physician on board. The fleet soon arrived upon their station off Ushant; and on the 22d, when about fourteen leagues to windward of Belleisle, a strange fleet was seen between them and the land, to which the British fleet immediately gave chase and captured three sail of the line, the rest having made their escape. In this action our loss was thirty-one killed, 113 wounded. Among the latter was Captain Grindall of the Irresistible. After the action Dr Trotter was sent for to visit this officer, and in ascending the ship's side, there being a heavy sea, and the ship rolling much, he sustained a severe bodily injury, an inguinal hernia, and which he never afterwards got the better of.

On the 9th July, the Charon, with the wounded on board, left the fleet. On the 15th they put into Weymouth and landed Captain Grindall at his own house. On the 16th they arrived at Spithead, and landed the sick and wounded at Haslar. On the 15th August the Charon again joined the fleet off Groa, and distributed stock, vegetables, fruit, and porter to the different ships for the sick, which the Doctor visited the same day; and considered highly necessary, from the number of scorbutic cases on board. All the worst cases were taken on board the Charon, where the hospital diet consisted of fresh mutton broth prepared every day, the meat roasted or made into a chop if preferred, flour or rice pudding, occasional custards, eggs dressed in different ways, soft bread, baked daily, pea soup nicely seasoned, pancakes, apple dumplings; flummery with wine and sugar the supper for convalescents; tea, coffee, cocoa, wine, porter, punch, negus, &c. Nor was there ever found an excuse for not having all this on board.

On the 16th November the Charon arrived at Spithead, and landed the sick at Haslar. She was ordered to be fitted up to receive troops, and prepare for the West Indies under Rear Admiral Chris-

tian ; and the medical staff was ordered on board the *Medusa*, a fifty gun ship, having been fitted at Plymouth as an hospital ship to attend the fleet, where, at the request of the Doctor, the Lords of the Admiralty were pleased to order the same improved diet to be supplied as was customary in the *Charon*, with the addition of a milk cow, which completed the hospital arrangement to the entire satisfaction of the Doctor,—complete in every thing that could be devised by him for the comfort of the sick. The *Medusa* joined the fleet, consisting of nineteen sail of the line, receiving from time to time the worst cases from the different ships, occasionally returning and landing the sick at Haslar and Plymouth hospital.

In this year 1798, the principal diseases in the fleet were malignant ulcer and small-pox. The latter disease had occupied much of the physician's attention ; and while busily engaged in preventing and endeavouring to extirpate this loathsome disease, so often imported into our ships, the valuable discovery of the protecting and antivariolous powers of the cow-pock was published by Dr Jenner. Vaccination was begun in the fleet without delay, and carried on by the surgeons with a zeal and activity that soon brought the value of the discovery to the fairest proof. Dr Trotter then moved the surgeons to give authority to their experience of its prophylactic power against small-pox, in presenting a gold medal with suitable devices to the venerable discoverer. We believe this was the first compliment from a public body paid to Dr Jenner, as will appear in his letter of acknowledgment to Dr Trotter.

*Plymouth, February 20, 1801.*

SIR,—You are perhaps no stranger to the information of the new inoculation being directed throughout the navy by Admiralty authority. The inquiries that had been instituted in the channel for the last seven years had called the attention of the surgeons to guard against the introduction of small-pox among seamen, which in more than a hundred instances, during that time, had been imported by ships. Twenty of these have occurred within the last six months in this fleet. Amidst subjects so ill prepared for its reception, more than the common proportion of deaths has been the consequence.

Such was the tenor of our researches when Dr Jenner announced to the world the vaccine inoculation as a preservative against the variolous infection.

As far as the new practice has extended among us, it has been followed with the usual success, and so mild that the subjects of it have not been considered in the number of sick on the list.

But the value of conducting the vaccine inoculation with spirit and perseverance throughout the navy may be best estimated by calculating the seamen at 10,000 who are unconscious of having had small-pox. In this proportion I am justified by the experience of musters in infected ships. How dignified the councils of any nation that by timely precaution shall ward off so much human misery. The medical officers have not been passive spectators of an event so singular in the history of animated nature ;—an event

which the philosopher will contemplate with wonder, and the friend of his species view with exultation. Although secluded by their office from the earliest communication with the progress of medical science, what relates to the vaccine disease has been earnestly sought after, and the whole of your opinions and practice have excited uncommon attention.

I am, therefore, requested to present you, in the name of these gentlemen, with a gold medal and suitable devices, at once expressive of their sentiments in favour of the new inoculation and to commemorate its introduction into this department of the public service. With the more pleasure I comply with the wishes of my worthy associates, as I am confident that no token of respect bestowed on a benefactor of the human race was ever conferred from more honourable or disinterested motives. It will not be less acceptable to Dr Jenner that it comes from a body of officers connected, by the exercise of their profession, with the most brilliant period of our naval history. As far as their authority has influence, they thus offer their warmest support to the cause. The progress of truth is sometimes slow, but always certain. It is not in the nature of medical investigation long to resist the evidence of facts, and it is far less the province of medicine to check the current of charitable feelings or to circumscribe the duties of benevolence. We must therefore hope, that, while the liberal discussion it has undergone shall secure the suffrage of the enlightened mind, the love of offspring will confirm its favourable reception throughout domestic life.

Accept, Sir, in the name of my naval friends, my hearty congratulations on the honours that await your professional engagements. May the present age have the justice, and the public to remunerate what posterity will be glad to appreciate! May the medical profession have virtue and candour sufficient to acknowledge the value of your labours! May your example be a model to the rising members of that profession which you adorn! And may you be blessed with length of days to see your discoveries the means of abridging and preventing disease, pain, and deformity throughout the habitable globe. Enclosed I have the honour to transmit a list of the medical gentlemen and their stations in His Majesty's naval service. I beg, with all personal esteem and regard, to subscribe myself,

SIR, Your faithful humble Servant,

To Dr Jenner.

THOS. TROTTER.

Dr Jenner's answer to Dr Trotter.

SIR,—I beg you to accept my sincere acknowledgments for the distinguished honour conferred upon me in your presenting me with a gold medal in the name of the medical officers of His Majesty's navy.

From no quarter could such a mark of attention for the endeavours I have exerted in pointing out the means of annihilating the small-pox have been received with greater pride, or with warmer emotions of gratitude, since there is no situation occupied by medical men where the value of the discovery of vaccine inoculation could be more justly appreciated. If anything could enhance the

estimation in which I shall ever hold such a mark of distinction, conferred by such respectable characters, it is, that it has been presented to me by a man who has cultivated the most useful science with so much success, and introduced so many valuable improvements into the navy of Great Britain. I have the honour to be your much obliged humble Servant,

EDWD. JENNER.

Dr Trotter next exerted himself to get the gin shops in Plymouth Dock and Stonehouse reduced from 300 to 100, as being destructive to the health of the seamen. In this he succeeded; for his letter to the Admiralty on the subject was submitted to the Lords of Council, and an order was sent to the Lord Lieutenant of Devon to shut up 200 of these sinks of health. The health of the fleet became so perfect under the medical discipline that was now practised, that empty hospitals and full ships were the consequence.

Dr Trotter continued his services till 1802, having been physician to the fleet for nearly nine years. No physician ever served so long in a fleet. The boat duty of the fleet for so long a period was at times severe, and in ascending the ships' sides, when there was much sea, exposed him to great danger, and most serious hurts; and from the injury he had previously received in attending a wounded officer, after Lord Bridport's action, increasing in its painful tendency, he found himself incapable of this duty without much pain and hazard. He was rewarded with a pension of ten shillings a-day, but under the restriction, that when employed in any government department, it would be withheld. He never received any half-pay either as a physician or surgeon.

The rules for the prevention of disease formed the great outline of Dr Trotter's code of health, as being suited to the naval service. There was but one opinion among the officers of the fleet, of the great perfection to which he had brought the health of the navy. He was unwearied in his exertions, and never shrunk from his duty. He was the sincere and warm friend of the medical officers, and never failed to avail himself of every opportunity to advocate their cause, and improve their situation. Of this the surgeons were duly sensible, and upon several occasions expressed their gratitude by presenting him with pieces of plate, and other marks of their gratitude. The surgeons of the squadron at the Cape of Good Hope presented him with a handsome gold snuff-box. The letter which accompanied it is so expressive of the estimation in which he was held by the corps, that I shall take leave to read it to the society.

*Cape of Good Hope, June 1, 1797.*

DEAR SIR,—The real happiness which I feel in communicating to you the deep sense of gratitude and esteem of the surgeons of the little squadron now on this station, for your able, unwearied, and in some measure successful exertions to promote the general interests of the British navy, but particularly that department of it with which they are more immediately connected, can only be exceeded by that which I am sure you will more sensibly feel, on receiving so public, honourable, and marked a testimonial of it.

At a meeting purposely held to take this subject into consideration, it was unanimously agreed to present you with a gold snuff-box ; and in the name of the meeting, I am directed to beg your acceptance of it, as a token of that sense of obligation to you with which they are strongly impressed. With the most heartfelt satisfaction they have already observed a considerable improvement in the medical department, and in their hitherto neglected situation. To your unceasing labours in their behalf they are ready to ascribe a great share of it, and to you they offer their unfeigned acknowledgments, looking forward with confidence from what has already been done, and relying on your persevering exertions—of the continuance of which they gladly perceive an implicit promise in your late publication. They do not despair of seeing the plan of improvement you have pointed out ultimately crowned with complete success. That you may long continue at the head of that department, where you have been so deservedly placed, as the reward of industry and merit, and that you may, as heretofore, both by your example and precept, continue to infuse and disseminate among the navy surgeons that laudable spirit of inquiry to promote the interests of medical science by a chaste and faithful collection of facts, is the sincere and ardent wish of those in whose name this letter is written, and of him who is most truly yours, GEORGE M'CALLUM.

To Dr Trotter.

*Answer.*

*Portsmouth, 11th February 1798.*

SIR,—I have been favoured with your letter of the 1st June last, inclosing a resolution of the surgeons of His Majesty's ships at the Cape of Good Hope, and also the elegant present that accompanied it. It is no small satisfaction to me to find that the fruit of my professional studies has been favourably received by so respectable a part of the list of navy surgeons on a remote station. And this testimony of their regard shall be preserved in everlasting remembrance.

But, while I receive with the utmost sense of gratitude the assurance of estimation which their gift is meant to commemorate, I must beg leave to observe, that, in any exertions of mine which the surgeons may please to think to have benefited their establishment, I have been barely doing my duty, for the public service can never be sufficiently secured till men of superior abilities in science are duly rewarded. It may be thought that medical men occupy but an insignificant place, and fill but a trifling employment, in the great scale of national business ; but the complete prevention and easy extinction of some diseases, scurvy and contagion, that on former occasions baffled all naval operations, demonstrates this to be a mistake, and which, joined to the matchless discipline of our officers at a momentous crisis, proclaim, in emphatic terms, that it is natural for an Englishman to live at sea. Accept my best thanks for the delicate and friendly manner in which you have communicated this information. And believe me most sincerely yours,

T. TROTTER.

To George M'Callum, Esq.

On his retirement, the surgeons of the fleet recorded the testimony of their regard by presenting him with a set of tea plate expressive of his services, and their gratitude for his many acts of kindness to themselves. The inscription on the urn is as follows,—

Doctori Thomæ Trotter,  
Classis Regiæ Medico Primario,  
Multa de patriâ bene merenti ;  
Hoc Munusculum,  
Pignus Observantiæ Summæ,  
Chirurgi Navales Lubentissime  
Offerunt,  
Et Publicæ Salutis, et Privatæ  
Amicitia, Testimonium  
Sacrum esse voluere—1802.

A physician to a fleet or army has a duty to perform that can but seldom come within the practice of the private physician.

The brave man who risks his life in the service of his country is exposed to hardships, dangers, and privations, unknown anywhere else. In his sick-bed he is deprived of the affectionate attendance of nearest and dearest relatives, so that he has to look to his physician alone to compensate for the want of all these comforts. Few medical men, we believe, ever received greater marks of regard and gratitude than Dr Trotter from both officers and seamen, for his visits to the ships were always welcomed with the utmost pleasure.

To conclude this notice of his public service, it may be truly said of him, that no physician ever witnessed the sick-bed under such a variety of circumstances as fell to the lot of Dr Trotter. After his retirement he practised as a physician in Newcastle. On two days in the week he gave gratuitous advice to the poor, and many thousands availed themselves of it. His infirmities increasing, he relinquished practice in 1827, and went to reside in Roxburghshire, and in 1830 to Edinburgh, where he remained for two years, and afterwards returned to Newcastle, where he died on the 5th September 1832.

His professional works deservedly rank high, and are frequently quoted as authorities by medical professors and teachers. The titles of his publications are, Medical and Chemical Essays, Treatises on Scurvy, Treatise on Nervous Diseases, Essay on Drunkenness, and several others, amongst which are an Address to the Proprietors of Coal Mines on the means of destroying Damp, a Practical Plan for Manning the Royal Navy, a small volume of Poems, and also many other contributions to the periodicals of the day.